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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 001914

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AF/S FOR BNEULING  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)  
SUBJECT: JOYCE MUJURU SLATED FOR VICE-PRESIDENCY

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher W. Dell under Section 1.5 b/d

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: The ruling ZANU-PF party has probably temporarily deferred succession tensions within its ranks by tapping Minister of Water Resources and Infrastructural Development Joyce Mujuru as its second Vice-President at party provincial meetings on November 21. Provincial executives left the party's remaining leadership intact, signalling little change in leadership chemistry or in Robert Mugabe's unrivalled supremacy as the party heads into its upcoming Party Congress in early December. The party's selection processes appeared to function quite democratically, with no apparent intervention by Mugabe to direct a particular outcome. END SUMMARY.

Mujuru In, Presidium Otherwise Intact  
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[12.](#) (U) Ruling party provincial executives on November 21 nominated Joyce Mujuru, the wife of retired General Solomon Mujuru, to assume ZANU-PF's Vice-Presidential slot vacated on the death of Simon Muzenda last year. Provincial executives also nominated three incumbents to round out the ruling party's presidium: President and First Secretary Robert Mugabe, Vice-President and Second Secretary Joseph Msika, and Chairman John Nkomo. The four candidates are expected to be approved when the Fifth Party Congress convenes December 1-5 in Harare. Mujuru would then in all likelihood join Msika as one of the Government's two Vice-Presidents. The Constitution provides that the President can appoint up to two Vice-Presidents, which historically have always been the ZANU-PF Vice-Presidents.

[13.](#) (U) While Mugabe's position was unchallenged, the three other senior positions in ZANU-PF were hotly contested. Mujuru was the choice of six of ten provincial councils, edging out Speaker of the Parliament and Party Secretary for Administration Emmerson Mnangagwa. The octogenarian Msika, who was long reported to be under pressure to step down, was tipped by seven councils over the party's Women League boss Thenjiwe Lesabe, who was the preference of three. John Nkomo beat Minister of Justice, Legal, and Parliamentary Affairs Patrick Chinamasa, six provinces to four.

Women's Wing Asserts Itself  
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[14.](#) (SBU) Mujuru's star has risen rapidly since September, when the party's Women's League resolved to submit a woman candidate for the vice-presidency and the popular press continued to push the issue. Advocates cited a 1999 party resolution and SADC-related undertakings on gender diversity in leadership representation to bolster their case. Under pressure from the Women's League, the politburo on November 18 reportedly resolved that one of the four presidium positions should be held by a woman. Foremost candidates were Mujuru and Thenjiwe Lesabe, the party's senior woman who hails from the ZAPU wing of ZANU-PF and whose chances would have been enhanced had Msika stepped down. In a November 20 interview publicized in the state media, President Mugabe publicly endorsed the notion of having a woman Vice-President.

Mugabe on Top With No Succession Line  
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[15.](#) (C) As an exercise to tip the balance in the party's sub rosa succession struggle, the selection process was inconclusive but will probably shelve the issue temporarily. Under the Constitution, Mugabe can designate either VP to assume the duties of the presidency if Mugabe is unable to perform them. If Mugabe were to die or become permanently incapacitated, the designated VP would serve as President only until a new presidential election were held within ninety days. Neither Msika nor Mujuru command a wide or secure enough standing in the party to be the likely ruling party candidate in such an election, thus setting the stage for a short-fused and uncertain succession battle should Mugabe suddenly depart the stage. (The Muzenda/Mujuru VP slot, ascribed to the ZANU party wing would generally be considered to be ahead of the ZAPU-descended Msika slot.) In the meantime, however, Mugabe's position atop the party seems as unchallenged as ever. Indeed, his unwillingness to anoint

a successor throughout the process contributed to the eventual selection of an unthreatening figure -- one who emerged after other more powerful candidates had been cut down by enemies and rivals with no apparent effort on Mugabe's part.

#### Mnangagwa's Waterloo?

16. (C) The process' big loser was Mnangagwa, long assumed by many to be Mugabe's preferred successor. The Speaker had withstood repeated investigations of financial scandal, sometimes reportedly with the President's intervention on his behalf. Despite both having positioned many of his supporters in the party's provincial restructuring over the past year and knowing where everybody's skeletons were, Mnangagwa's troops failed to back him decisively at this critical moment. Whether they did not trust him or thought him too "unelectable" to head the party (or both), key supporters defected once Mugabe endorsed the party's gender resolution. Mnangagwa no doubt was hurt by the unprecedented assertiveness of the party's women's wing, but may have been done in even more by machinations of rivals. Reputed "kingmaker" Solomon Mujuru (Joyce's spouse, although the two reportedly do not live together), for example, reportedly told Mnangagwa in front of other party leaders that Mnangagwa would never be the party's leader as long as he was alive. Having previously staged comebacks with Mugabe's help from defeats in his race for Party Chairman (against John Nkomo) in 2000 and in his parliamentary race against the MDC the same year, Mnangagwa's star may have been eclipsed for the last time.

#### Other Losers

17. (C) No provinces backed announced VP candidate Didymus Mutasa, the mercurial ethnic Manyika and Party Secretary for External Affairs, or Vitalis Zvinavashe, the retired General who had had held himself out as a candidate for unspecified national office. The unsuccessful Lesabe may have been pushed by Mnangagwa forces to meet the gender resolution's requirement at Msika's expense (in the ZAPU-wing slot) instead of Mnangagwa's. Chinamasa's stealth run for the Party chairmanship (it was unreported in the popular press) is interesting. Often viewed as a hard-liner technocrat with little constituency and totally reliant on the Mugabe's favor, he managed to take four provinces. He and Lesabe may have been on some kind of ticket with Mnangagwa; the three of them took three provinces (Matabeleland South, Masvingo, and Midlands), with Chinamasa also picking up his home province of Manicaland and Mnangagwa surprisingly taking Bulawayo. (Curiously, Bulawayo alone defied the party's gender resolution by not choosing a woman for any slot.) Party Chairman John Nkomo, oft-cited as a candidate to succeed Mugabe, was rumored to have had the inside track on the Msika slot had Msika stepped down.

#### Some Disgruntled, Likely Quiet

18. (C) Some party constituencies are likely left grumbling by the Veepstakes' resolution. Many in the country's Karanga ethnic group -- Zimbabwe's most numerous -- had long argued that it was "their turn," and that one of their ranks should be the next in line to run the country after Mugabe, a Zezuru. The elevation of Mujuru, also a Zezuru, leaves the party's two highest ranking ZANU-wing figures both from the same clan. (Msika is an ethnic Manyika from the ZAPU wing of the party.) Also disappointed will be some of the party's young Turks, who hoped the naming of the Vice-President would more decisively signal the party's succession course. Their frustrations will likely simmer along quietly for now but may heat up as the end of Mugabe's term approaches in 2008.

#### Party Processes Functioning

19. (C) The party showed itself capable of following its processes in an orderly (and yes, even somewhat democratic) manner in conducting what was a fractious contest for an important position. Different factions and figures all participated in a remarkably inclusive process. We are unaware of evidence that President Mugabe stepped in to exert decisive influence; quite the contrary, several insider reports indicated that Msika resisted Mugabe's (and others') efforts to get him to relinquish his VP seat and that Mugabe otherwise kept above the fray. Alas, the party still seems unprepared to show as much equanimity in its inter-party relations as it has in its intra-party processes. Indeed, the dichotomy between relative democracy within ZANU-PF and the party's/government's repressive practices nationally only underscores Mugabe's continuing vision of "democratic" one-party state. Finally, it remains to be seen whether, with succession tensions subdued somewhat for now, a healthier policy-making dynamic can take shape among the

inward-looking leadership.  
DELL